

TRIBUTE TO JOHN R. CYR

• Mr. MARSHALL. Mr. President, I rise today to honor and recognize Mr. John R. Cyr, the inaugural recipient of the NCRPC's Lifetime Public Service Award.

The North Central Regional Planning Commission—NCRPC—was formed in 1972 following the establishment of planning and development districts through executive order of the Governor of Kansas. The NCRPC serves 12 rural counties in Kansas, with the mission of advancing rural Kansas through comprehensive planning and development services. In 1980, the U.S. Economic Development Administration designated the NCRPC as an Economic Development District—EDD—which established the commission as the regional leader in economic and community development.

In 2022, the NCRPC established its Lifetime Public Service Award, to be presented to John R. Cyr on November 10, 2022. Mr. Cyr has not only been instrumental in the founding and growth of the NCRPC, but has been a leader in regional planning, economic development, and rural community revitalization. Henceforth, this award will be presented annually to distinguished rural central Kansans who most exemplify the lifetime commitment to strengthening our rural communities.

The establishment of this prestigious award, and the recognition of Mr. Cyr as its inaugural recipient will serve not just as an ongoing tribute to those that have given so much to better their communities but also as an inspiration to people of all ages to public service and strengthening our rural communities.

I now ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing Mr. John R. Cyr for a lifetime of public service, as well as honoring his work to advance rural communities in Kansas.●

TRIBUTE TO JULIE SCOTT

• Mr. MARSHALL. Mr. President, I rise today to honor and recognize Ms. Julie Scott of Sedgwick, KS.

Julie is one of nine principals receiving the Terrel H. Bell Award for Outstanding School Leadership for 2022. She is the principal of R.L. Wright Elementary School and is to be honored during the National Blue Ribbon Schools Awards Ceremony on Thursday, November 3, 2022.

During her 4 years as principal of R.L. Wright, Ms. Scott has made it her mission to make the school a safe learning environment for all students, where everyone feels a sense of community. Through her outstanding leadership, the school has launched several programs to help achieve these goals.

To promote early learning, she created the school's full-day Cardinal Kids Pre-K Program. Ms. Scott also launched Cardinal Connect, an after-school program for students, and Cardinal Boost, a tutoring program focus-

ing on improving students' reading and math skills. Julie values the opinions of her students and works to incorporate them into bettering the school. To help accomplish this, she introduced the principal advisory team, which brings fourth, fifth, and sixth graders together to provide their input on school improvements.

Ms. Scott also led the creation of the school's family activity building. This program encourages a strong community by bringing students from different grade levels together for monthly bonding activities. Each group is led by an R.L. Wright faculty member, providing students with a consistent adult contact throughout their time in elementary school. Julie also introduced a "community build day" when the school received new playground equipment. Members of the Sedgwick community came together to help with the installation of the equipment.

She also strives to make the best environment possible for others at the school. Julie introduced R.L. Wright's Morning Community, where the entire school comes together to say the Pledge of Allegiance and listen to daily announcements. Julie formed collaborative teams with the introduction of Professional Learning Community times. These collaborations are designed to build team spirit and connection with the community. She launched a learning community for paraprofessionals, providing them with additional training and support in monthly meetings.

Julie's passion for her students and the additions she's brought to R.L. Wright are a shining example for educators everywhere. She is more than deserving of this award. I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing the wonderful impact Ms. Julie Scott has had on the Sedgwick community and to honor her for her dedication to serving the students of R.L. Wright Elementary School.●

RECOGNIZING THE 4-H ALL-STAR MEAT JUDGING TEAM

• Mr. MARSHALL. Mr. President, I rise today to honor and recognize the Kansas 4-H all-star meat judging team.

The Kansas 4-H all-star team won the national championship at the 2022 4-H meat judging contest championship. The exceptional work ethic and dedication of the Kansas 4-H all-star team led to the first ever national title for a Kansas team since the contest started in 1970.

To be selected for the all-star team, students must have excellent evaluation, as well as strong decision-making skills and outstanding oral communication. This team of Kansans have dedicated significant amounts of time to studying and preparing for the championship, working with their coaches and studying independently leading up to the contest.

The team placed first in several categories, including retail cut judging,

retail cut identification, oral reasons, and overall judging. They also placed second in pork judging and beef judging. Their efforts are a great illustration of the dedication and hard work seen across the Kansas agriculture community.

A strong agricultural industry is not only important to the State of Kansas, but also to our country. That is why it is so encouraging to see young people throughout Kansas that are so committed to advancing the agricultural industry and proudly representing the next generation of Kansas farmers.

I now ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing the Kansas 4-H all-star meat judging team for their exceptional work and their efforts in bringing the first meat judging national title to the great State of Kansas.●

REMEMBERING DIDAR SINGH BAINS

• Mr. PADILLA. Mr. President, I rise to recognize Didar Singh Bains, a community leader in California, who passed away on September 13, 2022, at the age of 84.

Didar embodied the pioneer spirit of the Golden State. He left a small village in his native Punjab, India, for America with almost no money to his name. Didar found agricultural work in the Imperial Valley before eventually working his way to Yuba City in the northern part of the State.

Through hard work he tapped into California's fertile soils and rich agricultural bounty to build a farming empire that spanned California, Washington, and British Columbia. His particular gift for cultivating peaches earned him the moniker of "Peach King."

But Didar was much more than a farmer; he was a philanthropist, a pillar of his community, and a beacon of hope for Sikh immigrants across the country who were often fleeing violence in search of a better life.

A man of great faith, Didar raised money to build a Sikh temple in Yuba City, and he became the youngest president of the Stockton Gurdwara Sikh temple in 1965. He also founded the World Sikh Organization in 1984, which has donated millions of dollars to philanthropic causes around the world. After Sikhs became targets of discrimination and violence following the September 11 terror attacks, he worked with community leaders to meet with President George W. Bush in hopes of educating the Nation on the Sikh community.

The nearly 100,000 Sikh Americans who travel from across the country each year to Yuba City's annual Nagar Kirtan festival have Didar Singh Bains to thank. Didar was a champion for Yuba City and the surrounding region. His legacy is felt to this day by the businesses that now line the largely rural area. It can be seen in the political gains for Sikh Americans, exemplified by his nephew winning mayoral office in 2009 and becoming the first Sikh

American elected to lead a city in United States history. And it can be told by the countless number of immigrants whom he helped achieve the American dream.

My deepest condolences to his family, community, and Sikh Americans everywhere.●

REMEMBERING CARMEN RAMIREZ

● Mr. PADILLA. Mr. President, I rise today to celebrate the life of Carmen Ramirez, a relentless advocate for Oxnard, CA; a champion for the environment; and a dear friend to so many.

Born in Oklahoma—but a true daughter of California—Carmen grew up in the community of Pico Rivera in Los Angeles County. She attended the University of San Francisco and California State University, Los Angeles, before graduating from Loyola Law School.

Her passion for improving the lives of others eventually brought her to Oxnard. Beginning in 1978, Carmen served as a legal aid attorney working to represent low-income Californians of La Colonia. Among her many legal and professional accomplishments, she later served as president of the Ventura County Bar, president of the Women Lawyers of Ventura County, a trustee for The Colleges of Law for Santa Barbara and Ventura, a member of the board of governors for the California State Bar, and a member of the executive committee of the California Bench Bar.

But what drew Carmen into public service was her passion for the environment. In 2007, she joined the fight to oppose a liquefied natural gas project proposed near the beaches of Oxnard, and she fought successfully to protect her community. She would go on to become a staunch advocate in our fight against the climate crisis and to promote renewable energy, always leading with kindness, compassion, and composure.

She was elected to the Oxnard City Council for 10 years, where she served for 8 years as Mayor pro tem, promoting the causes of social and environmental justice. She went on to serve as the first Latina on the Ventura County Board of Supervisors in 2020.

Carmen cared deeply about her community. And in turn, her community cared deeply about her. Just ask one of the hundreds of Californians who crowded Plaza Park to pay tribute at her vigil. Remembered that day in tearful embraces, cutting through the sounds of the mariachi, and echoed in shouts of “Viva Carmen Ramirez!” we can see the lasting memory she leaves behind.

While she was taken too soon from family, friends, and her community, we will always have the example she set—defined by moral leadership and a fundamental care for others—to follow.

“Viva Carmen Ramirez.”

Oxnard, Ventura County, and all of California mourns her loss.●

TRIBUTE TO BISHOP CHARLES E. BLAKE, SR.

● Mr. PADILLA. Mr. President, I rise today to congratulate Bishop Charles E. Blake, Sr., on a lifetime of service to his community and a career of caring for others.

Bishop Blake has served as pastor of the West Angeles Church of God in Christ for 53 years—53 years as a pillar of Crenshaw and South Los Angeles.

While it may be hard to believe, there was a time before the name Blake was synonymous with Crenshaw. Charles E. Blake, Sr., was born in Little Rock, AR, into a family of faith. His father was a preacher and well-respected leader in the Pentecostal faith. Both Charles and his brother, J.A., would go on to preach in the Church of God in Christ.

After his family moved to California and notably after his first sermon at the age of 16, he attended California Western University and subsequently earned his master's degree at the Interdenominational Theological Center in Atlanta. It was there—as student body president, surrounded by Black students and faculty, and as a leader of student civil rights marches in Selma and Montgomery—where he began to see the strength of Black community power.

In 1969, he became senior pastor of West Angeles Church, where his powerful sermons from a pulpit in South Los Angeles grew his congregation rapidly and brought together the community. By 1999, what had once been a 300-person church on 5th Avenue and Adams Boulevard had grown to require the construction of the ornate, 5,000-seat West Angeles Cathedral.

Bishop Blake's unwavering faith and exalted message of devotion earned his election as presiding bishop of the Church of God in Christ four times, representing millions of worshippers around the globe. It also led to his appointment by President Obama to the Inaugural Advisory Council on Faith-based and Neighborhood Partnerships.

But to countless families in South Los Angeles, whether attending a Sunday service or watching the Crenshaw corridor grow around them, his commitment to his community is what is most memorable. Over his decades of leadership, he brought to Crenshaw affordable housing, a performing arts theater, and a K-12 school; encouraged economic growth and businesses that provided jobs to Angelenos; created programs to lift up Black men with educational and financial literacy resources; and secured invaluable attention and resources for neighborhoods in South Los Angeles.

He invested in the Crenshaw corridor when it needed it most, and we thank him for his faith and service.

All of California wishes him and his wife, Lady Mae L. Blake, well in retire-

ment, and we wish his son, Charles E. Blake II, luck in his new role as senior pastor.●

TRIBUTE TO FATHER GREGORY JOSEPH BOYLE, S.J.

● Mr. PADILLA. Mr. President, I rise today to congratulate Father Greg Boyle on 50 years of service as a Jesuit priest and as a compassionate leader for families in East Los Angeles.

For over three decades, Father Boyle has served as founder and director of Homeboy Industries, the largest gang rehabilitation and re-entry program in the world. Based in Los Angeles, Homeboy provides an off-ramp for thousands of former gang members and at-risk youth.

Born in Los Angeles in 1954, Father Boyle first joined the Society of Jesus in 1972. After being ordained as a priest in 1984, he went on to serve Dolores Mission Church in Boyle Heights, where he saw the severity of poverty and violence in Los Angeles that condemned generations of Angelenos to hardship, incarceration, and—all too often—the loss of loved ones.

But he didn't shy from the dangers before him or ignore a community in need of care. Guided by the tenets of his faith—of nonviolence, of love, of care for others—he brought together his parish and community leaders to found what would later become Homeboy Industries. At its start, the organization focused on providing educational resources and employment services.

It would soon grow into a haven for hope for thousands of people in East Los Angeles, throughout the region, and beyond. Through Homeboy Bakery, Homeboy Diner, Homeboy Merchandise, and more, hundreds of people find job training and a reason to get up and get better each and every day. And once inside their doors, surrounded by people who have been through similar challenges, Angelenos are provided support for substance abuse, mental health services, and legal and educational resources.

Each month, Homeboy Industries also provides free tattoo removal services for nearly a thousand Californians to remove gang-related tattoos, removing a common barrier to finding work, and providing safety from visible signs of gang affiliation.

Father Boyle has lived his faith through action. Over five decades of service, he has believed in the goodness inherent in each of us. He has had the compassion to give second chances when others wouldn't. And for those who needed a little light, true to his Jesuit mission, he has the persistence to “go forth and set the work aflame.”

In the “lethal absence of hope,” as he describes it, Father Boyle has brought love, understanding, and a bright future to thousands of Angelenos, and we are grateful for his service.●